



California Department of Fish and Game Deer Management Program 2003 Deer Zone Information

Wildlife Programs Branch
1812 9th Street Sacramento, CA 95814

Eastern Sierra and Inland Deserts Region

General Deer Hunting Information For

ZONE X-9c

and

Area-Specific Archery Hunt A-18

(No Additional Hunts Scheduled)

GENERAL INFORMATION FOR DEER HUNT ZONE

This information sheet has been prepared to assist deer hunters applying for, or planning to hunt in, Zone X-9c located in portions of Inyo and Mono counties. The following information should be useful to hunters for archery season (A-18; Zone X-9c Archery Hunt), Zone X-9c general season and any "additional hunts" within this geographic area. For more specific information or additional questions regarding this area contact the Eastern Sierra and Inland Deserts Region, Bishop Field Office (760-872-1171).

REGULATIONS

Laws and regulations are designed to conserve wildlife and to provide for an equitable distribution of game mammals. The hunter who knows the laws and regulations can enjoy the hunting experience more. All hunters should read and be familiar with the current hunting regulations available online at:

http://www.dfg.ca.gov/fg_comm/2003/mammalregs03.html Remember you must obtain and have in your possession written permission to hunt on private property. Hunter trespass laws are strictly enforced.

The 2003 deer hunting regulations specific for Zone X-9c (general season tag), Area-Specific Archery Hunt A-18 (archery season only tag), and any additional hunts are at the end of this sheet.

To hunt deer during the archery season in Zone X-9c, hunters must possess an A-18 hunt tag (Zone X-9c Archery Hunt). This tag is valid **ONLY** during the prescribed archery season and **may not** be used to hunt deer during the general zone season, even if using archery equipment.

To hunt deer during the general season (rifle) in Zone X-9c, a hunter must possess a Zone X-9c tag. This tag is valid **ONLY** during the prescribed general season for that zone. These tags **may not** be used to hunt deer during the Hunt A-18 archery season, even if using archery equipment.

This zone is a popular deer hunting area with lower tag quotas. Any additional deer hunts in Zone X-9c are listed in the Additional Deer Hunts section, below. Typically, tags for Zone X-9c (A-18 tags are usually available after the draw) and any additional deer hunts are in high demand and distributed through the Department's Big Game Drawing held in June. To hunt in this area, hunters must plan ahead and are encouraged to submit hunt applications by late May. For information regarding deer tag application procedures and obtaining a deer tag for this area see the Big Game Hunting Booklet, available on-line at: <http://www.dfg.ca.gov/licensing/biggame/biggamebook.html>

Successful hunters are reminded to immediately fill out both portions of the tag and permanently mark the date of kill; attach the tag to the antlers, or ear if antlerless; have the tag validated and countersigned; and return the completed report card portion to the department within 30 days of taking a deer.

LAND OWNERSHIP/PUBLIC LAND OPPORTUNITIES

The majority of Zone X-9c is public land administered by the Inyo National Forest (USFS) and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). In addition, there is land owned by the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power and private land. For information regarding these lands contact the following:

USFS Offices:

Inyo National Forest, 351 Pacu Lane, Suite 200, Bishop, CA 93514 (760-873-2400)

BLM Offices:

Bishop Field Office, 351 Pacu Lane, Suite 100, Bishop, CA 93514 (760-872-5000)

Ridgecrest Field Office, 300 S. Richmond Road, Ridgecrest, CA 93555 (760-384-5400)

In Zone X-9c and other zones throughout California, additional deer hunting opportunities may exist on private property licensed through the Department's Private Lands Management Program (PLM). For more information on the PLM and to obtain a list of participating ranches, go to the following link:

<http://www.dfg.ca.gov/hunting/deer/plm.html>

REMINDER: Hunters should be aware that much of the zone borders National Park Service (Death Valley National Park) and military lands (China Lake Naval Weapons Station), which are closed to hunting.

MAPS

For general maps detailing individual zone or additional deer hunt boundaries, go to the following link:

http://www.dfg.ca.gov/hunting/deer/deer_maps.html

The most comprehensive map of the area is the Inyo National Forest map. USFS maps are available at all USFS offices or you can contact the USFS Pacific Southwest Regional Office at: 1323 Club Drive, Vallejo, CA 94592 (707-562-8737).

BLM surface management maps may also be useful. The Last Chance Range, Saline Valley, and Darwin Hills BLM maps are good sources. You can purchase these maps at BLM district offices or you can contact the BLM at 2800 Cottage Way, Room E2841, Sacramento, CA 95825 (916-978-4400).

U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) topographic maps, are very helpful, especially for topographic features that are not displayed on USFS or BLM maps. USGS maps may be available from sporting goods, backpacking or engineering stores or you can contact the USGS directly at: U.S. Geological Distribution Center, Denver Federal Center, Box 25286, Denver, CO 80225 (888-ASK-USGS). Some specific 7.5-minute quadrangle maps for the portion of the zone surrounding Highways 395, 6, and 168 include Mazourka Peak, Tinemaha Reservoir, Uhlmeier Spring, Westgard Pass, White Mountain Peak, and Boundary Peak. USGS 7.5-minute quadrangle maps for the Piper Mountains Wilderness Area include Chocolate Mountain, Deep Springs Lake, Joshua Flats, and Sylvania Canyon; and for the Inyo Mountains Wilderness Area, some USGS 7.5-minute quadrangle maps include Bee Springs Canyon, Cerro Gordo, and Dolomite.

Another map that may be of value is the American Automobile Association (AAA) map of Bishop, CA and Death Valley National Park.

ACCESS/MAJOR ROADS

U.S. Highway 395 is the primary route of access through Zone X-9c. This major north-south highway parallels the eastern escarpment of the Sierra Nevada between the town of Olancho, situated at the southwest corner of the zone, and the city of Bishop, located in the zone's northwest corner. Beginning just north of Bishop, Highway 6 provides access to the northwest portion of the zone, which includes the west slope of the White Mountains. Hunters can use Highway 6 to access numerous drainages that flow

west from the White Mountains, including Silver Canyon, east of Laws. Other major highways within the zone that can be accessed from Highway 395 include Highways 168, 178, and 190. Highway 168 (Westgard Pass Road), which intersects Highway 395 at Big Pine, provides access into upper elevations of the White Mountains by way of the Bristlecone Pine Forest National Scenic Byway. The Westgard Pass Road also links with Highway 266 (Highway 3A), which provides access to the extreme northeastern portion of the zone, including the eastern flank of the White Mountains. Using Highway 168, hunters can access USFS land in the Papoose Flat and Squaw Flat areas of the Inyo Mountains. Highway 168 also provides access to the Sylvania Mountains and Piper Mountains Wilderness Areas. The southern end of the Inyo Mountains Wilderness Area, located 5 miles east of Lone Pine, can be accessed by San Lucas Canyon, while the northern end can be accessed by Mazourka Canyon Road.

WEATHER CONDITIONS/TRAVEL TIPS

The weather in this region is highly variable so BE PREPARED. Mild days and cold nights with temperatures well below freezing are common at higher elevations of the zone, while warm days and cool nights are typical at the lower elevations. Hunters should also expect cold, snowy conditions at higher elevations of the zone particularly within the White Mountains. Thundershowers are common. You should be prepared with appropriate clothing and equipment for a variety of weather conditions.

Zone X-9c encompasses a large geographic area with topography ranging from flat in the lower elevation valleys to extremely steep and rocky in the higher mountain ranges. The White Mountain portion of the zone is extremely remote and rugged and subject to severe weather conditions. Most services are located within the various towns scattered along the base of the Sierra Nevada escarpment, including Olancha, Lone Pine, Independence, Bishop, and Benton. Hunters are advised to have full gasoline tanks when entering the field and to carry snow chains, shovel, serviceable spare tire, and extra food and water. Four-wheel-drive vehicles should be used when traveling on unimproved roads within the zone. Be sure to use extra caution when driving off-road and check with USFS or BLM regarding any vehicle travel restrictions that may be in place.

CAMPING

Inyo County has a wide variety of camping opportunities on USFS, BLM, and county lands. For campground information contact the USFS (Inyo National Forest, White Mountain Ranger Station, 798 North Main Street, Bishop, CA 93514; 760-873-2400); BLM (Bishop Office, 760-872-5000; or Ridgecrest Office, 760-384-5400); or for Inyo County campgrounds the County Department of Parks and Recreation, County Services Building, 785 N. Main Street, Suite G, Bishop, CA 93514 (760-873-5577). Overnight camping is not allowed on Los Angeles Department of Water and Power lands.

For areas where dispersed camping is allowed, you need to obtain a California Campfire Permit for the use of any open flame (including gas stoves, lanterns, wood fires, charcoal fires, or smoking). These permits can be obtained at no cost from any Inyo National Forest Ranger Station and BLM office. Open flame of any kind may be restricted during times of high fire danger; check with the local Forest Service office for current restrictions.

Please, DO NOT CAMP at springs or other water sources important to wildlife and livestock. Remaining at artificial wildlife water sources (guzzlers) can be a Fish & Game violation. YOU can pack water, wildlife can't!

HARVEST INFORMATION

Information on deer harvest for this area is available in tables contained in the annual Deer Kill Reports available on-line at: <http://www.dfg.ca.gov/hunting/deer/deerhunt.html> The most useful tables for the purposes of planning or applying for hunts in this area are Tables 1b (Harvest and Success Information), 2a (Antler Class Information) and 10b (Drawing Statistics).

HERD CONDITIONS AND HABITATS

The deer population in Zone X-9c is considered to be slightly declining. As with most deer herds in California and other western states, the long-term population trend has been on a steady decline since the 1960's and 1970's. Short-term fluctuations in deer populations are usually attributed to weather

events that affect forage production and the availability of water.

The subspecies of deer inhabiting Zone X-9c is the Inyo mule deer. The deer herd found within the boundaries of Zone X-9c is the Inyo-White Mountains Deer Herd. Deer in Zone X-9c are migratory, spending summers at higher elevations (7,500-12,000 feet) in the Inyo and White Mountains and winters at lower elevations (4,500-7,500 feet). Deer migration between these summer and winter ranges occurs twice annually, once during spring and then again in the fall. Migrations generally follow traditional routes oriented along major topographic features, such as drainages or the bases of mountain ranges. Fall migration back to the winter range is generally patterned by snow storms and freezing temperatures at the higher elevations. This migration generally begins in late October and follows the same traditional routes used by deer in the spring. During heavy fall snowstorms, deer will migrate together from the summer range, often making the trip to the winter range in just a few days. As the snowline lowers and the days become progressively shorter, deer concentrate on the winter range for the breeding season, which begins in mid-November.

No major deer migration route has been delineated in either the Inyo or White Mountains. Both the winter range and the summer range cover vast expanses of area making it likely that there are numerous migration routes, each used by a small numbers of animals. During winter on the White Mountains, snow is too deep and temperatures too low to serve as deer winter range. To a lesser extent, this is also the case in the Inyo Mountains. Temperatures and snow conditions at low elevations are more favorable to wintering deer. However, these deer may migrate down much lower than would be required by weather conditions alone. This movement is most pronounced in the early spring, and presumably it is to take advantage of succulent forage in the desert scrub plant community.

Summer use for the most part occurs at high elevations in both the Inyo and White Mountains. Limited field surveys, conducted by the Department of Fish and Game, indicate that most deer summer at high elevations in the White Mountains, either on the open expanses on the top or at the heads of drainages. Summer use also occurs at lower elevations in both ranges, particularly along drainages with year-round streams or springs. The Owens River provides year-round habitat for a small number of deer as well.

Deer in Zone X-9c occupy an ecologically diverse zone composed of numerous plant communities ranging from desert scrub at the lowest elevations (4,500 feet) near Coso Junction to alpine at the highest elevations (14,000 feet) in the White Mountains. The desert scrub community occurs from approximately 4,500 to 6,500 feet. Common species associated with this plant community include shadscale, big sagebrush, black sage, Mormon tea, rabbitbrush, winterfat, Indigo bush, and buckwheat. The pinyon woodland community occurs from approximately 6,500 to 9,500 feet. Pinyon pine is the dominant tree in this area, although Utah juniper can be an important co-dominant species. Big sagebrush is the dominant shrub in the pinyon woodland community. Other common species include desert bitterbrush, antelope bitterbrush, Mormon tea, rabbitbrush, and mountain mahogany. Common herbaceous species are June grass, Indian rice grass, and squirreltail grass. The upper elevation area of this plant community is dominated by treeless, sagebrush-dominated vegetation.

Subalpine forest occurs from 9,500 feet to 11,500 feet in elevation. The bristlecone and limber pine are the dominant tree species in this plant community. Common shrubs include sagebrush, mountain mahogany, fernbush, and creambush. The alpine tundra plant community occurs from 11,500 to 14,246 feet (White Mountain peak). Vegetation is extremely sparse at these elevations and mainly consists of low growing perennial shrubs and annuals.

HUNTING TIPS AND WHERE TO LOOK FOR DEER

Successful hunters often spend a considerable amount of time scouting pre-season, locating individual or groups of deer, recently used deer trails, and feeding and bedding areas. You may not see many deer from the roads in this area and generally the more successful hunters do more hiking to locate deer. Binoculars and/or spotting scopes can be very helpful for locating and identifying deer at greater distances. In general, attempt to hunt areas that are away from other activities such as concentrations of hunters, vehicles, and/or livestock.

Deer occur throughout the entire zone during the general hunting season, however most deer activity is concentrated around water sources because habitat conditions are typically dry.

In the White Mountain portion of the zone, most deer are taken near the top of the southern half of the range where access is good. These areas include Cottonwood Basin, Crooked Creek, Wyman Canyon, and Westgard Pass. Hunters have also been successful in Pellisier Flats and Chiatovich Flats in the northeastern portion of the zone.

In the Inyo Mountains, hunter kill information indicates that the Waucoba Mountain and Gilbert Pass areas have the greatest concentration of deer. The Inyo and Piper Mountain Wilderness areas provide a remote, high country, rugged hunt for those who seek solitude. If hunters prefer a more accessible hunting location, the Owens River, from Laws extending south to Lone Pine, provides some excellent hunting opportunities as well.

For additional information about deer hunting in California, see the Department's publication "Guide To Hunting Deer In California" at the following web site:

<http://www.dfg.ca.gov/hunting/deer/deerguide.pdf>

ADDITIONAL DEER HUNTS

In 2003, there are no additional deer hunts scheduled in Zone X-9c.

2003 ZONE AND ADDITIONAL HUNT SPECIFIC REGULATIONS

§ 360. Deer.

Except as otherwise provided in this Title 14, deer may be taken only as follows:

(b) X-Zone Hunts.

(15) Zone X-9c.

(A) Area: In those portions of Inyo and Mono counties within a line beginning at Highway 395 and the Kern-Inyo county line; north along Highway 395 to Highway 6; north on Highway 6 to the California-Nevada state line; southeast along the California-Nevada state line to Highway 127; south along Highway 127 to the Inyo-San Bernardino county line; west along the Inyo-San Bernardino county line to the Kern-Inyo county line; west along the Kern-Inyo county line to the point of beginning.

(B) Season: The season in Zone X-9c shall open on the third Saturday in October and extend for 23 consecutive days.

(C) Bag and Possession Limit: One buck, forked horn (see subsection 351(a)) or better, per tag.

(D) Number of Tags: 650.

§ 361. Archery Deer Hunting.

(b) Archery Hunting With Area-specific Archery Tags. Deer may be taken only with archery equipment specified in Section 354, only during the archery seasons as follows:

(18) A - 18 (Zone X-9c Archery Hunt).

(A) Area: As described in subsection 360(b)(15)(A).

(B) Season: The archery season for hunt A - 18 (Zone X-9c Archery Hunt) shall open on the third Saturday in August and extend for 23 consecutive days.

(C) Bag and Possession Limit: One buck, forked horn (see subsection 351(a)) or better per tag.

(D) Number of Tags: 350.

**** GOOD LUCK! ****